



SACRE VISITOR PROTOCOLS

Visiting schools should be an enjoyable and stimulating opportunity for you to see RE and collective worship in action. Lancashire schools can show you some excellent practice. Try to go in with an open mind and avoid giving your own opinion, particularly about controversial issues. Remember you are not an inspector and that the teacher has a job to do.

Purpose of visit (it may be one or all of these):

- To look at, listen, learn about and celebrate RE practice and / or collective worship (in community schools);
- To find out how RE and / or collective worship contribute to the school's ethos and the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- To represent SACRE to the school, its staff, students and governors.
- To obtain information for a short report to inform Lancashire SACRE and assist future planning.

Preparing for the visit:

- Find out as much as you can about the school from its website or ask our attached LA officer for help.
- Check out safeguarding rules and protocols. Make yourself familiar with the school's visitor policy. Do not have unsupervised access to pupils even if you are in a group. Only take photographs approved by the headteacher. (Do we need SACRE badges and how portable are DBS clearances?)
- Make sure you can explain what SACRE does; maybe give the most recent annual report to the school.
- Make sure you are clear about why you are going. Remember you have been invited and you are not making judgements about the quality of teaching.

Arranging the Visit:

- Find out the time and place of arrival and the length of the visit.
- Agree beforehand with the contact person what you want to achieve. What is the focus of the visit? Make sure you keep to what has been agreed.
- Discuss who you wish to meet and what you would like to see.
- Can you speak to pupils about their views of RE and / or collective worship (in a community school).
- Remember you may not have the chance to speak to individual teachers before or after a lesson.

Possible questions to ask pupils/students

- Do you enjoy RE – which parts do you like and why, if not why not?
- Why do you think it is important to study RE?
- How well are you doing in your RE lessons?
- Have you visited any places of worship?
- Have you had any visitor to talk in RE?
- What would you like to do more of / change?
- Do you enjoy collective worship /celebrations?
- Have you had an opportunity to take part / help plan / evaluate worship?

Possible questions to ask RE co-ordinator and /or Head:

- How is RE taught in this school, how often / by whom?
- How do you show the importance of RE?
- How helpful is the agreed syllabus and support materials?
- How could the local authority or SACRE help improve RE for the pupils?
- What access do you have to funding / training / links with other schools / organisations?
- How do you show the importance of acts of collective worship?
- How are the Governing Body involved in RE / collective worship?

Possible questions to ask the teacher:

- Before the lesson can the teacher tell you what they are doing in the lesson, its purpose and the intended outcome?
- What will happen next, after this lesson?
- How does the teacher check what progress students have made in the class?
- How does the teacher support students who are making slower progress / faster progress?

Things to look out for:

- Displays in open areas and classrooms.
- Pupils' enjoyment of the lesson or activity – are they listening to the teacher and each other, do they contribute and ask questions?
- Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff.
- Resources available – books, artefacts, visual material, technology, equipment.

Being a welcome guest: (remember you are not an inspector)

- After greeting the teacher sit somewhere out of the way or where you are asked to sit.
- Listen quietly unless asked to comment or take part.
- Be aware of your body language – smile and look encouraging.
- Don't make notes or comment on the teacher's conduct or that of individual pupils.
- Remember that it is someone's workplace and you are a visitor; be considerate.
- When asking questions make sure you sound like an interested lay person with no note of challenge.
- Show appreciation for the hospitality you have been shown.
- Mention things which have particularly pleased or interested you.
- If something concerns you try to speak to the SLT link before you leave the school.

After the Visit:

- Send a thank you note to the member(s) of staff and, if you visited a class, to the students.
- Fill in a brief report on the visit as soon as you can, share it with the school then pass it to the Chair of SACRE for discussion at next meeting. Do not mention pupils by name in the report.
- Ask for the report to be presented to the Governing Body.
- Evaluate the visit. Did you achieve what you set out to do?